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There is no cultivation of standing crops. Weeding is done by hand, usually by the women and children. The fields are sometimes fenced with posts and saplings bound crosswise with withes, somewhat like our own post and rail fences, but this seems to be rare. It is only resorted to in places where the wild pigs are numerous.

When the grain begins to ripen, members of the family are on guard day and night to drive away birds and wild pigs, whose nocturnal raids often cause serious damage. Cords with bits of cloth or leaves attached are sometimes suspended over the fields, but there seem to be no elaborate scarecrows comparable to those of Malaysia. Bamboo bull-roarers are often used to frighten away the birds, but this task is usually delegated to small boys armed with slings. They are very expert with these weapons and I have seen a boy bring down a bird no larger than a sparrow at twenty yards. At night the men keep guard with spears, to drive off pigs. Also, traps are set in their runs and at gaps in the fence.

The Menabe, like the Ikongo, sacrifice before beginning the harvest, but their method is slightly different. A post, called *fatotra*, is set up in the *tavy* of each family. It is about 4 feet high and 2 or 3 inches in diameter (Fig. 23, k). The top is split in the form of a cross and little wedges inserted with their ends projecting almost horizontally, forming a small stand or platform about 6 inches across. The husband, not the wife, gathers the green rice and makes the *lango*. He places a little of it, on a piece of the leaf of the Traveler's Palm, on the *fatotra* and says: "Oh *Fahasivy*, [ancestors], you have given us a good harvest. We give you this meal as your share." The neighboring Betsimisaraka make their harvest sacrifice in the same way, but mix rice chaff with the *lango*.

After the sacrifice has been made, the harvest commences. The rice is headed with small iron knives identical with those used in weaving, as razors, etc. (Fig. 1, f). The stalks are cut between the knife blade and the thumb, two or three at a time, and the heads dropped into a basket held in the left hand. The heads are often dried on mats in the sun before they are stored. No use is made of the straw, which is left to rot in the fields.

The granaries, *homby*, are small houses, shaped like miniature dwellings. The walls and floor are of split and interwoven bamboo and the roof heavily thatched with the leaves of the Traveler's Palm. They are always raised on smooth posts, to keep out the rats, but the height varies greatly. The average is about 6 feet, but some are as low as 4 feet, and others as high as 12 feet. There is a small door

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IX. WEAPONS AND WARFARE

Weapons

The Tanala Menabe have a number of traditions regarding the introduction of various weapons. According to these, the aborigines of their territory had no arms except wooden spears. These were made from *Lambinana*, a large tree with moderately hard, heavy wood, or *Anivona*, a small palm which has an extremely hard rind ½ to ¾ inch thick. The latter wood is said to be somewhat poisonous, wounds received from it festering and healing with difficulty. The *Lambinana* spears were sometimes plain, sometimes forked, like those used until recent times for fishing (Fig. 2, d). The *Anivona* spears were simply pointed staves. Neither was barbed.

The first invaders are said to have been armed with *Anivona* spears, a peculiar missile weapon called *kitala* or *antalaka*, slings, iron axes of two types and shields. The blow-gun came into use later, although still in remote times. Spears with iron heads did not come into use until near the beginning of the historic period. They were copies from those of the plateau tribes. Guns were obtained from the east coast tribes, who acted as middlemen between the Tanala and European traders. Swords and fighting knives were unknown until the Imerina domination and never became popular.

In historic times the principal weapon has been the spear, *lefona*. Spears of *Anivona* wood are still occasionally used and are said to be little inferior to those of iron. They are usually simple poles, 5 to 6 feet long and about 1 inch wide, ground to a smoothly tapering point. In a few specimens the shape of the iron spears has been imitated (Fig. 24, k). Iron spears are divided by the natives into three types, based on the shape of the blade (Fig. 24, f, g, h). They are usually crudely made and lack the spade-like butt piece characteristic of other Madagascar spears. Heavy spears (Fig. 24, f) were, and still are, used in pig hunting, the lighter forms only in war. They were always thrown, the axe being used for close fighting. It is said that war spears were sometimes poisoned, but the composition of the poison has been forgotten.

The *kitala* is of considerable interest. It seems to have no parallels outside Madagascar but may be distantly related to some African throwing knives. It is made from two straight spikes of *Anivona* wood about ⅝ inch in diameter and 16 to 18 inches long (Fig. 25, c). These are notched in the center and bound together

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411 with cord in the form of a cross. The ends are ground to keen points. The weapon is thrown with an overhand motion and has an effective range of about 15 yards. Natives say that it is feared because, when it strikes a shield, it will pivot around it and wound the man behind. At present it has fallen into disuse, like all other weapons. The Antaisaka, on the southeast coast, have a similar weapon which they call *fivingo*. The Mahafaly also say that this was the principal arm of the Kimosy, the aborigines of the southwestern part of the island.

411 223 Slings are still in ordinary use for hunting birds. The Tanala are not considered especially good slingers by the other tribes, but I was often amazed by their skill. The maximum effective range seems to be about 75 yards while at 50 yards slings are as dangerous as firearms in native hands.

411 Slings are made from raffia or, less frequently, bast. Occasionally the pocket is formed by dividing the sling into two strands (Fig. 24, d) but this type seems to be rare. Most slings have a pocket about 4 inches long and 1½ to 2 inches wide at the center, tapering toward the ends (Fig. 24, e, e1). The cords are usually wrapped for 2 to 3 inches beyond the pocket on each side. The total length of the sling, folded for use, is about 30 inches. The release cord ends in a knot. The retained cord is longer and tapers to a slender tail which is wrapped around the palm. In about 50 per cent of Tanala slings one cord is of plaited and the other of twisted fiber. The natives could give no reason for this except that it was an ancient practice. [171] Slings from the Marquesas and Society Islands show the same peculiarity. Smooth river pebbles are used as ammunition. There are no indications that prepared slingstones have ever been used.

The ordinary axe, *antsi*, has already been described in the section on Wood Working (Fig. 10, d). It serves both as a tool and as a weapon and native men never travel without one. At the time the tribe was disarmed the natives surrendered their spears and other weapons readily, but maintained their right to carry axes, saying that they could not live in the jungle without them. In addition to the ordinary axes there are war axes, *antsi lava*. These have long heads pointed at the end, like a heavy single-edged knife. The handle is often as much as 3 feet long (Fig. 25, a). Such axes are now rare.

Shields, *patsy*, have been obsolete for many years. They were round or slightly oval and quite small, the largest not over 2 feet in diameter. The body of the shield was made of soft, light wood.

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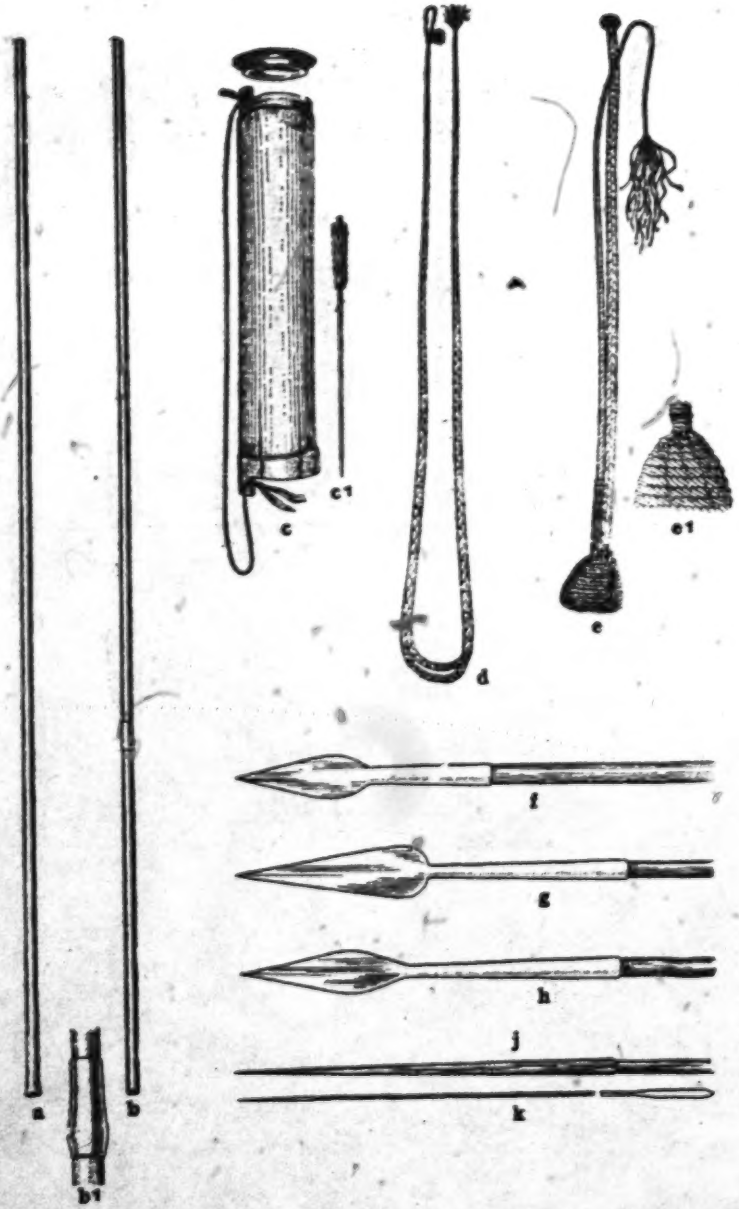

FIG. 24. Weapons. a, Wooden Blow-gun; b, Bamboo Blow-gun; b1, Detail of Reinforced Joint on Bamboo Blow-gun; c, Blow-gun Quiver; c1, Dart; d, e, Slings; e1, Detail of Sling Pocket; f, g, h, Iron Spear Heads; j, Head of Wooden Spear; k, Wooden Spear.

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411 The outer surface was convex, to allow room for the handle. This was cut from the solid piece, its inner surface being flush with the rim of the shield (Fig. 25, b). The average thickness of the wood was 1½ to 2 inches. The face of the shield was covered with rawhide with the hair on. This was put on wet, stretched tight, and fastened with wooden pegs driven through it into the rim. Apparently, shields were never decorated. They were used mainly for fending spears, being too small to afford much shelter. However, one old [726] man said that in attacking a village the warriors would run in and crouch under their shields while they hewed a way through the stockade with their axes.

The blow-gun, *faly*, was an important weapon in ancient times. It was rarely employed in open battle, but was effective in the defense of villages and for sniping from ambush. The Tanala say that it was much dreaded by their neighbors in the plateau, who were unaccustomed to jungle fighting. It is still in constant use for hunting lemurs and other small game and few households are without one.

Two types of blow-gun are in use, natural tubes made from thick reeds or a long-jointed species of bamboo, and wooden blow-guns, which have to be pierced. The former are rarely over ¾ inch in diameter and are 10 to 12 feet long. The septa are pierced with a hot iron. Such guns are often reinforced at the joints with rings of rawhide, made by drawing on sections of the skin from a cow's tail while wet (Fig. 24, b, b1).

The wooden blow-guns are thicker and shorter, but never over 1¼ inches in diameter. They are made from shoots which have a pithy center or from whole stems of a small species of palm. The bore is hollowed out with an iron spike about 10 inches long and ¼ inch in diameter. This is heated red hot and forced down into the soft center of the stem. As the hole becomes deeper, it is shaken down by striking the bottom of the stem on the ground. A number of reheatings are, of course, necessary. When the pith has been burned out from end to end, the spike is heated once more and is slid rapidly back and forth to smooth the bore and make it of uniform diameter. The ends of wooden guns are often reinforced with bands of rawhide, like those already described. Occasionally they are coated with melted beeswax, to make them more nearly air-tight. I saw a few specimens in which the muzzle had been marked by scraping the wood flat on a strip about ¼ inch wide and 1 inch long. This showed which side of the gun was to be kept uppermost in shooting and was also useful as a sight.

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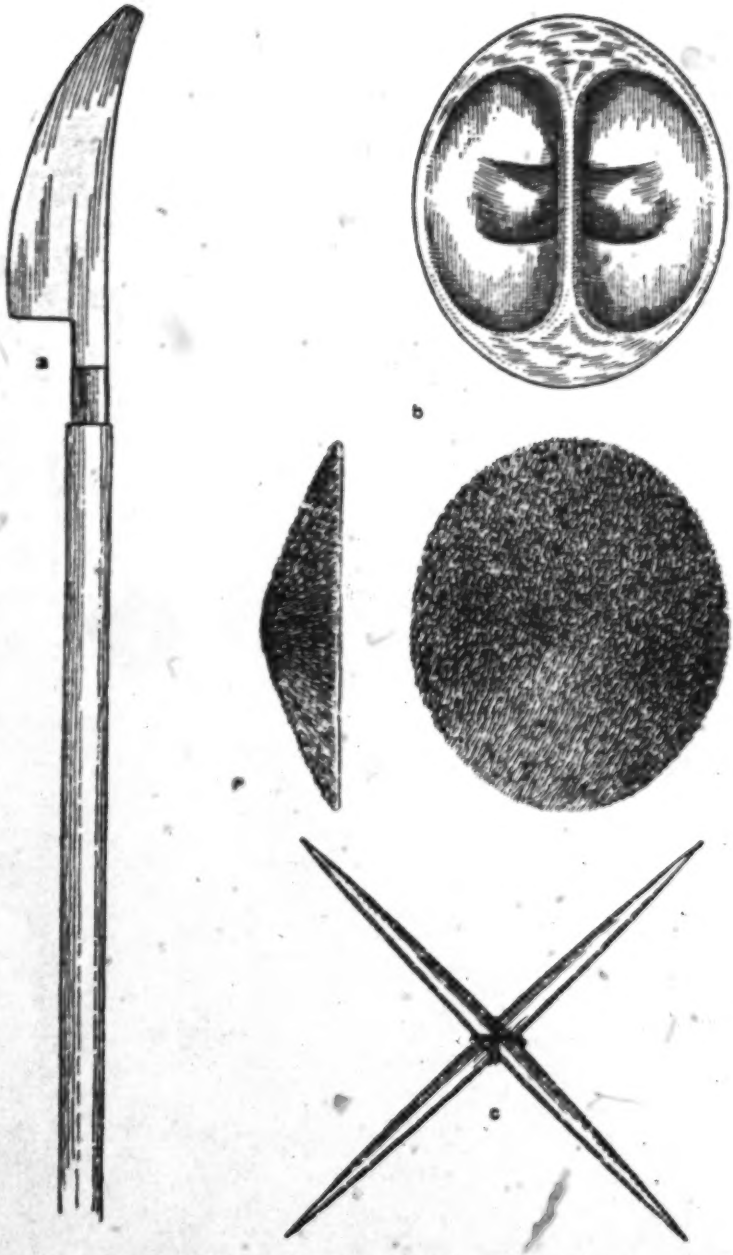

FIG. 25. Weapons. a, War Axe; b, Shield; c, Throwing Crum.

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411 The darts are made from splinters of bamboo, the smaller species being preferred because of their greater hardness. The shaft is about ⅛ inch in diameter and 10 to 11 inches long, tapering to a plain needle point. The feathering covers 2 to 2½ inches at the upper end (Fig. 24, c1). It is made of floss obtained from the half-ripe seed heads of a small purple flower, one of the Cichoriaceae. When the shaft is ready for feathering, the maker takes a slender filament of raffia and ties one end of it to the top of the dart, holding the other between his toes. He takes a seed head, splits the calyx with his thumb nail, and holds it against the shaft. He turns the shaft slowly, winding the filament around it in a descending spiral and at the same time presses the floss out of the head with his thumb. The filament catches the floss and binds it firmly to the shaft. Lastly, the filament is wrapped around the shaft two or three times, below the feathering, and tied. A single seed head will feather three to six turns, about ¾ inch and new seed heads are fed in as needed. The feathering requires only ten seconds and the complete dart can be made in less than a minute.

There has been some question as to whether poisoned blow-gun darts have ever been employed in Madagascar. Attempts to increase the efficacy of the weapon are almost universal, but most of the substances used are not actually poisonous. The Sakalava use the blow-gun in war to shoot charmed pieces of bone and pellets of earth from tombs against the enemy, both of these being powerful evil charms. The people of the east coast soak the darts designed for bird hunting in lemon juice, believing that it irritates the wound. In several groups there are charms for both the gun and the darts and the latter are sometimes smeared with magical preparations.

278 411 I am convinced that the Tanala Menabe use a genuine poison on their darts. The tribes who have fought against them certainly believe so, and I have myself seen lemurs which had been killed by small and apparently superficial wounds. The natives are rather reticent in regard to it, but the following formula for making it was obtained from a man of the Zafindiamanana gens:

Take scorpions, wasps, ants of a large, solitary species having a very poisonous sting, small black water beetles, the end of a cock's bill, a bit of cloth from the packing of a piston bellows and the heart wood of the *hisika* tree, a species of ebony, and grind them to a paste. I suspect that the insects, at least, must be added in a fixed number for each variety, but the informant was unwilling or unable to tell. Apparently no charm is recited at any stage of the work. The insects

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are selected for their poisonous qualities, but the other ingredients are considered magical. The cock's bill gives the dart sure direction and force, like a cock pecking, the rag from the piston bellows increases the force of the air, and the *hisika* wood, which is dark red, will cause the animal to bleed to the last drop.

The poison is made into a cake. Just before shooting a little of it is smeared on the head of the dart and a pinch put on the shooter's tongue. The Tanala say that this poison will kill a large lemur in four or five minutes and that it does not injure the flesh. It is possible to eat even the parts immediately about the wound. I suspect that the active principle in the poison comes from the *hisika* wood, or from some compound which it forms with the insect poisons, for the area within which effective blow-gun poison is known seems to correspond closely with the natural range of this tree.

In addition to the actual poison just described, there is a belief in magical poisons. One informant told me that if a blow-gun was rubbed with the juice of a certain plant all arrows shot from it would be poisonous. Another spoke of a medicine made from a certain root which was so deadly that if it was placed under a house everyone inside would suffer from stomach ache. The hunter inoculated himself with this by rubbing a little of it into a cut in his lower lip and thereafter all darts he shot would be poisonous.

The darts are carried in quivers of wood or bamboo with tight-fitting wooden covers to protect them from the constant rain (Fig. 24, c). Their maximum effective range is 50 to 60 yards.

The bow seems to have been known to all the Madagascar tribes, but the Tsimahety, in the northern part of the central plateau, were the only ones who used it in war. It is said to have been their main arm. Elsewhere it was little more than a toy and was rarely used by adults. The only Tanala bow seen was a toy (Fig. 28, b), but it is said that large boys formerly used them for hunting. The hunting bows were about 3 feet long and roughly made. The arrows were about 2 feet long and unfeathered. They were usually simply whittled to a point, but one informant had heard of iron arrowheads, made from bits of thin metal with a socket for the shaft.

WARFARE

The Tanala were not lacking in courage or fighting ability, as is proved by their long and successful resistance to the Hova empire, but they were one of the least warlike tribes in Madagascar. A *mélange* of defeated gentes, numerically weak and politically divided,